



REVIEW ON DRUG ADDICTION AND PREVENTIVE MEASURES AMONG ADOLESCENCE

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ABSTRACT

*Drug addiction is a global problematic concept facing mankind. Drug is any natural or artificial substance, other than food that by its chemical or physical nature alters structures or functions in the living organism. Drugs could disrupt the original function of the brain and cause interruption in conversation and work performance and leads to destructive behavior. Drug addiction is a chronic problem that is difficult for addicts to overcome, which leads to problems and negative effects on the adolescence wellbeing, family, education, economical, and social aspects. The following drugs were abused; **Opium, Morphine, Heroin, Cocaine, Methylenedioxy-Methamphetamine** ('feel good drug'), **Cannabis** etc. The abuse of these drugs leads to violence, depression, suicide, rape, illness etc. The present study dealt on the causes of drug addiction and preventive measures among the adolescents, 200 selected samples of secondary school student from Ogbunike boys secondary school, Ogbunike (SS3) and Nawfia boys secondary school, Nawfia (SS2). These participants consist of 110 males and 90 females, age 15-17 years with mean age of 16.02 and standard deviation of .81. Survey questionnaire were used to collect data from participants. Descriptive statistics and content analysis were used to analyze the data. Result shows that 77% had participated in drug addiction reason being that they want to be fearless and feel good all the time. Findings reveal that adolescents are joining drug intake, drinking and smoking away their future for the pleasure of getting high, hence, poses a threat to the health and safety of the age group, family, community and society. Recommended among others is that Ministry of Education and Culture in-partnership with National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) should improve arrangements for sensitizing adolescents on the adverse effects of drug addiction. Also teachers and parents should be provided with skills on how to handle adolescents with behavioural problems.*

Key words: Addictive behavior, preventive measures and adolescence

INTRODUCTION

There are over one hundred and ninety million drug users around the globe; and the problem has been increasing at an alarming rate, especially among adolescents and young adults (Mandal, 2019). To support this, the National Survey on drug use and health as reported by substance abuse and mental Health Services Administration, indicated that some children are already abusing drug at the age of 12 or 13 years, which likely means that some begin even earlier (National Institute on Drug Use, 2003).



According to (Dorwick and Maline, 2007), A drug is defined as any natural or artificial substance, other than food that by its chemical or physical nature alters structures or functions in the living organization. Drugs are special term referring to substances that harms a user's physical, mental, and emotional health as well as behaviour after use. As a result, a drug abuser becomes addicted and is highly dependent on the substance. Continued drug abuse leads to damage to self, family, society, and country (Galea, Nandi, & Viahov, 2004).

Moreso, drug addiction not only covers the mode of action or function of the drug, but also refers to functional disorder and maladaptation due to misuse of the substances. The brain is the main organ that controls the entire function of the body, emotions, and normal behaviour of the individual. Drugs and alcohol could disrupt the original function of the brain and caused interruption in conversation and work performance and leads to destruction behavior (Bonell, Sorhaindo, Allen, Strange, Wiggins, Fletcher, 2010). Functional disorder is affected by chemical substances and its effects are reflected in the drugs consumed. The personality of drug addicts shows that they had misused drugs.

Recently, drug abuse is on increase among adolescence and researchers and policy makers had it that much attention should be given so as to prevent this damaging phenomenon.

WHAT PROMPTS ADDICTS TO BE ADDICTIVE

1. Self-medicating

Self-medicating is the top reason people abuse drugs and Alcohol. Stress, anxiety, reoccurring pain, undiagnosed mental illnesses, severe depression, loneliness, trauma; these are all reasons why people would self-medicate with mind-altering substances to cope with what they are feeling or what they do not want to feel.

2. Peer Influence and Pressure

Our Youths also use drugs due to peer influence and pressure. To avoid losing friends, they try and get involved in drugs, which then leads to them neglect their studies and participating in unhealthy activities. This is because peers could influence one's behaviour throughout the adolescent phase (Oetting, Edwards, Kelly, & Beauvais, 1997).

3. Depression

Many people who struggle with depression do not get proper treatment or diagnosis for this problem. Those struggling with depression tend to self-medicate to handle the symptoms of depression with Alcohol, Marijuana, Cocaine, and various other mind-altering substances.

4. Parental Neglect and Abandonment



Adolescence with lack of parental attention found themselves feeling neglected especially when comparing themselves to colleagues with caring parents. They then turn to drugs to suppress their feelings of misery and obscurity.

5. Family-Poor Financial Background

The socioeconomic situation is also one factor for students using the prohibited substance (Gabhainn, Fotiou, & Vollebergh (2008). They usually live in disadvantaged areas and grew up in small and uncomfortable houses and they became victims of circumstances (Horwood, 2006). They are also linked to deficiencies in almost all necessities in life such as parents' lack of financial sources and other necessary parental cares.

6. To Feel Good

People start to abuse drugs and Alcohol because they want to feel better than they do. Whether it is stress, anxiety or enhancing their fun when going out on the weekends, using drugs or alcohol to feel better is a gateway to a severe addiction.

7. Legality

Nicotine and Alcohol are legal and loosely regulated to prevent addiction. Large percentage of people have been found to die from Alcohol-related causes across the world. Those who tend to abuse these substances use them for self-medication out of anxiety, trauma and stress.

8. Out of Curiosity

Curiosity is a thing of inborn as soon as a child is born which gets bloated at the age of adolescence. According to Erikson (1968), the adolescent phase is one of identity crisis whereby adolescents in this phase attempts to form a personal identity. At this stage, curiosity is strong, and they wish to find out for themselves the effects of using, and eventually fall into addiction.

9. Prescribed Medication

Some people think that because their doctor gives them a prescription, the medication they are taking is safe to consume without consequences. Unfortunately, Opiate-based prescriptions are extremely addictive and can act as a gateway to other drugs, like Heroin. 30% of emergency room admissions from prescription abuse involve Opiate-based substances.

10. Sexual purposes

Some drugs such as Steroids and Viagra (Sildenafil citrate) have been found to be used both as an energizer for sexual performance and treatment of erectile dysfunction. Therefore over reliance on such drugs will eventually lead to drug addiction.

11. Parent-Child Conflict

Parent-child conflict is also a factor attributed to addiction. This is because parents and children often clash in opinions such as choice of career in life and children become stressed as a result.



This tends to lead to an increase in conflict and parent-adolescent relationship becomes estranged (Steinberg & Morris, 2001).

12. Experimentation with Substance Use at a Young Age

The use of drugs or alcohol to conduct an experiment in youth at a young age can likely make the young person develop a problem with addiction later on. According to the **National Institute on Drug Abuse** (NIDA), people are more likely to have a substance use disorder if they started using drugs or alcohol before age 18. In addition, they are likely to have the disorder by the time they reach age 20.

CLASSIFICATION OF DRUGS COMMONLY ABUSED

The following drugs are abused; **Opium, Morphine, Heroin, Cocaine, Methylenedioxy-Methamphetamine** ('feel good drug'), **Cannabis** etc. The abuse of these drugs leads to violence, depression, suicide, rape, illness etc. There should be serious concern since our adolescents are fast joining the drug train, drinking and smoking away their future for the pleasure of getting high, hence, poses a threat to the health and safety of the age group, family, community and society.

Opium

This drug is gotten from the poppy seed which changes from white to brown-blackish in hue. It has a strong odour and elastic when new and hardens after exposed to air.

Opium serves as a depressor to the central nervous system.

Morphine

Morphine is an alkaloid and a product of a raw opium after processing . In the black market it is known as raw morphine, morphine base, morphine sulphate, or hydrochloric morphine.

Heroin

Heroin is the most commonly abused street drug by addicts across the globe especially in Malaysia. Heroin in its raw state is a bitter white powder that is produced from processing morphine. It is far more potent than morphine.

Cocaine

Cocaine is a white powder gotten from the coca leaves and originates from Peru, Bolivia, Colombia and South America. The "Freebase" cocaine is a cocaine base free of adulterants and smoked in pure form with a special pipe. Crack cocaine is cocaine mixed with sodium bicarbonate in granule form. "Crack" has a purity level of 90% and is very dangerous as it leads to serious addiction in a short time.

Methylenedioxy-Methamphetamine (MDMA)



"Methylenedioxy-methamphetamine" (MDMA) is a mescaline analogue and amphetamine known as a "feel good drug" and could increase user tolerance. MDMA pills are usually in icon or logo shapes to meet the taste of young users.

Cannabis

Cannabis is a general term used for all types of drugs obtained from the cannabis sativa plant. This plant originates from hot climate areas such as Asia, Mexico, Africa, and the Middle East. It is a complex substance and contains at least 421 types of chemicals with "tetrahydrocannabinol" (THC) as the main psychoactive compound.

Effects of drug use on Adolescents

Health Problems

- Addicts to drugs after a long period of time faces problems such as functional failure, mental illness, cancer, etc. This is because drugs have toxic contents.

Also linked to adolescents who abuse prescription medications are anti-social behaviour, mischief and negative attitudes.

Previous studies acknowledged this difference, whereby males are consistently more inclined to use psychoactive stuff to get high, get addicted, with behavioural problems compared to females who are more inclined to use psychotropic stuff as sedatives and pain killers (Choquet, Morin, Hassler, & Ledoux, 2004). This goes to show that both males and females are different in the rationale for drug use and they are inclined to abuse drugs for different reasons (Crawford, & Novak, 2002).

Discipline Problems

Student adolescents involved in drug addiction also are likely to be naughty and indisciplined to the concern authorities, especially parents and educators. Their involvement in unbeneficial activities lead to discipline problems such as truancy, bullying, and fights that negatively affect academic performance.

Academic Failure

Research shows that our youths who are in school abusing drugs are closely linked to decline in academic performance in school (Kurdek, 1992; Shek, Chan & Lee, 1998). This proves that academic performance of students is affected by drug use, leading them to academic failure and eventually abandon school before graduation.

Bad Stigma to Family Name

Addicted students also bring shame to the family name. They also burden the family as much time and money is spent to treat them and cause the family to suffer stress from societal stigma, who only sees their children as a social hazard.

Effect on Society

Youths involved in drugs also threaten public security with crimes such as robbery, snatch theft, and other crimes to get money, as they need money to assuage their taste. Addicts also distance



themselves from non-addicts and only mix with fellow addicts, drug dealers and criminals, as they belong to the same racket. They are then shunned by society.

Threat on National Development and Security

Increase in the population of addicts not only threatens, the national development but the security network, as it leads to a decline in human and labour resources. Adolescents who are students involved in drug-use lose interest in studying and leave school earlier, and finds it more difficult to find employment.

STEPS TO ADDRESS DRUG ABUSE

Behavioural and Psychosocial Approach

Behavioural and psychosocial approach, especially counselling is among the main methods to treat addicts. Through counselling, a person could be helped to develop daily stress management skills, increasing coping skills, as well as self-mastery in self-adjustment and problem-solving and later driving them to develop a healthy lifestyle. I therefore submit that, it is important to identify the efficiency of counselling programmes in drug rehabilitation centres.

Strengthening Family Institutions

Family plays an important part in addressing this problem. Each unit in the family has to play its respective roles. Parents have to pay attention to their children's actions so they do not mix with friends involved in unhealthy activities and could potentially fall into drug abuse (Brooks, & Rice 2007).

In fact, parents should provide good values to children to allow them to have an identifiable role model in life. According to Patton, Bond, Carlin, Thomas, Butler, Glover (2006). Individual values influence individual's way of thinking, behaviour, evaluation of situations and doing something in life. Values shaped from the environment during childhood carries on to adulthood and applied throughout life. Therefore, parental role is significant to shape their children to become useful humans and avoid them from practicing deviant behaviour.

Exhibiting Proper Parental Behaviour before Children

Parenting is a continuous process whereby there are various challenges in educating children. Among the processes include approaches in child-rearing, discipline, alternative child-care, joint parenting, art of parenting and others. Parents have to prepare with knowledge and skills to ensure their children are not involved in any form of social problems. There are studies that prove the influence of different styles of parenting cause students to partake in drugs. Proper parenting styles drive child attitudes in daily life towards a positive feel. Therefore, proper parental styles have to be carried out by each family to ensure a more perfect and ordered family life. This is because adolescents of today are different from others of previous eras. They are today more exposed to various cultures, technology and a more global environment.

Role of Schools

School is also a factor leading to students' use of drugs. Students' failure in paying attention to studies and with pressure from teachers and peers is most likely to cause them to turn to drugs to



suppress their feeling of dejection (Fletcher et al., 2007; Nutbeam, Smith, Moore, & Bauman, 1993). Therefore, schools have to provide early education on the harms of drug use to students. This approach is supported by evidence in recent studies, that conclude that changing school environment could decrease drug use, and is an effective complementary to existing approaches and might reduce drug use via promotion of student well-being without drugs, and increasing their confidence (Bond et al., 2004).

Awareness talks in Schools, Churches and Towns

Creation of awareness on the dangers of drugs could be held by law enforcements such as police who should be invited to give talks on crimes and punishments associated to drug abuse. This awareness could open the minds of students and young ones to the effects of drug use and the punishment for abusers.

Three-tiers Prevention mode

The above modes of prevention should be encouraged to assist our youths in avoiding the use of drugs. The primary mode entails stressing on the harms of drug and alcohol abuse. The secondary mode involves the timely detection of the dangerous effects of the abused material before any symptoms of addiction emerge. In substantiating this fact, each youth is exposed to the risk of taking and using drugs since addiction is a re-occurring chronic offence. Finally, tertiary mode of prevention includes medical treatment and assistance to addicted youths to overcome their obvious incapacitatedness.

Law Enforcement

The government should play an important role in eliminating this phenomenon especially among our adolescents. The enforcement of laws relating to drug use on our youths, so that they will know that drug abuse is an offence under the law. Good laws with weak enforcement would not help in eliminating this plague. Therefore, police have to carry out constant inspections to prevent drug dealers' intent on smuggling drugs into this country.

Strong Religious Basis

Adolescents with strong religious values are not easily swayed to try drugs. This is because they have the mental and physical strength to say no to drugs. They would also not do anything against the law. According to a study by Bahr et al. (1993) on the importance of religion on adolescents and drug abuse, they found that the religious factor provides a significant link between adolescents and drug abuse. According to Parker, Aldridge, & Measham, (1998) reports that, adolescents that consistently attend religious gatherings were found to have lower social problems unlike those that do not. This shows the importance of religion in influencing adolescents' behaviour.

Treatment and Rehabilitation Programmes

The governments do carry out a number of drug treatment and rehabilitation programmes such as:

Therapeutic Community Treatment and Rehabilitation programme

This is a psychosocial rehabilitation programme which emphasizes on the concept of family and community relations that drive towards behavioural transformation and formation of positive attitude. The therapy is carried out to treat and rehabilitate addicts from their physical and psychological dependence on drugs. Secondly, it brings about change in values, attitudes, behavior and the restructure of addict's personality. Thirdly, it helps addicts to develop and practice a healthy lifestyle and re-integration into society as normal, useful, and productive individuals.



Physical and Psychosocial Treatment

Physical rehabilitation involves medical, treatment activities, disciplinary training, sports and leisure activities; while psychosocial rehabilitation covers counseling and guidance, religious and moral education, vocational skills training, civic education and programmes focused towards re-integrating residents into society.

CONCLUSION

Conclusively, Ministry of Education and Culture in-partnership with National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) should improve on the existing arrangements on sensitization of adolescents on the adverse effects of drug addiction. Also teachers and parents should be provided with skills on how to handle adolescents with behavioural problems.

Finally, the Federal Government in conjunction with States Governments should establish drug addiction centres in different Local Governments in the Federation, and employ professionals in the areas of Psychology, Psychiatry, Social workers and occupational therapist to manage these centres for the benefits of the communities within the various Local Governments in the Country. By the establishments of these centres the youths and Nigerians with drug addictions cases will benefit in terms of rehabilitation, psychotherapy, counselling and psycho-education. These centres will help individual drug addicts to recover and abstain from drug addictions.

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